

Accountability for Catholic Church

February 9, 2019

To: Steve.Stafstrom@cga.ct.gov

Dear Mr. Stafstrom,

My name is John Timothy McGuire. I, and other victims of clergy sexual abuse at the hands of CT Catholic priests are finding ourselves stuck. The statute of limitations has run out on all of us. Just because we didn't speak of it soon enough, there is no path to justice. Some of us still refuse to be named, out of fear of retaliation from the church. Their interrogation techniques are nothing short of more abuse. Depositions, signed statements, videotaped depositions, denials, describing in detail the offender's private parts, dragging us through the mud for years, and so on. Most of the victims have resorted to self-inflicted healing. Trying to drug or drink it away. Some of us have lost our families over this. Others have lost their livers. Some have killed themselves.

At what point do we, as a society realize that the church has walked away from hundreds of it's victims just here in CT. I am one of many. We are in EVERY diocese in CT, bar none. We hail from Pawcatuck to Fairfield, and all points north. All we have is a support group once a month to try and lift up the most damaged in the group. This leaves nothing for those of us who manage better. The time we have spent trying to cope with losing God, our virginity, our families, our innocence, is the very time we would have spent structuring a life we chose. We live in damage control. It has been fifty years since the abuse in some cases. We did our part. We kept our mouths shut. It is time for the church to settle up.

I see a number of bills proposed to extend or eliminate the criminal statute of limitations on sexual assault. We are sending a plea for your legislative body to consider including the civil statute as well. We do understand the concern for an unfair bias toward people of color in reference to positive identification years later, but we also see the duck blind that provides for the church. There must be a way to separate the two. Lack of positive identification is not considered the problem for us. We all know our perps. In some cases, they wave goodbye as they head to a new place to continue abusing other children. How are we bound by by the same law? If the civil statute was extended or abolished, all victims of clergy abuse would at least get a chance at holding those responsible, accountable. Concerning first degree sexual assault of a minor by force, could the civil statute have a stipulation concerning clergy abuse?

One would think the sexual assault of a child in an adult's care is prosecutable, no matter how much time has elapsed. The forces used against the child were God, and an

adult over a child. To think the church just reassigned the pedophiles to other locations to continue their crimes is just as criminal, but because a pedophile priest has died, there is no avenue to prosecute the church? They have nine ways to Sunday to get out of being held accountable for these crimes. How about we get it whittled down to one defense, like everyone else in the world. "Did you provide the safe haven for your priests to abuse children?" "Did you fail to put in safeguards against said crimes after becoming aware of abuse accusations?" "Did you fail to report any or all accusations as a mandatory reporter?" What else do we need to know. We don't need the priests to be alive.

If a friend drove me to a house, and I then raped a person in that house, and the friend drove me home from the crime, wouldn't the friend be considered complicit in the crime? Wouldn't the driver have enabled the crime? How is the church not providing the vehicle for the pedophile priest? How is it that if "enough" time goes by, culpability disappears? I thought some crimes didn't have to adhere to the statute. First degree sexual assault of a minor by force. If the Bishop of the diocese enabled the crimes, isn't he culpable in said crimes? Wouldn't time be on the victim's side? Shouldn't time be on the victim's side?

I am willing to speak, testify, and stand on my head on the sidewalk. Their trail of destruction has yet to be fully realized. The list the Hartford Archdiocese put out was a dozen priests short of the real number. That could be scores of more victims.

If the law can't protect us, what's left? Please say there is something you can do.

John McGuire